

Message Text

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12

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AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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SUBJ: MEDIA CONTROL COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED

SUMMARY: NEW REGULATIONS DESIGNED TO ENSURE
MORE RESPONSIBLE, OBJECTIVE AND TRUTHFUL MEDIA
PROMULGATED BY GOP. AD HOC COMMITTEE OF MILITARY
PERSONNEL TO ENFORCE NEW RULES TO BE NAMED SHORTLY.
END SUMMARY.

1. IN COMPLIANCE WITH ONE OF STIPULATIONS IN PROGRAM
OF ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT, COUNCIL OF MINISTERS JUNE 22
AUTHORIZED NATIONAL SALVATION JUNTA TO ESTABLISH AN
AD HOC COMMITTEE TO CONTROL MEDIA PENDING LATER GENERAL
REVISION LEGISLATION IN THIS FIELD. COUNCIL CONCURRENTLY
ISSUED SET OF TOUGH RULES TO BE FOLLOWED IN SAFEGUARDING
LIBERTY OF EXPRESSION AND MILITARY SECRETS, IN PREVENTING
INTERNAL DISTURBANCES CAUSED BY "IDEOLOGICAL AGGRESSIONS"
AGAINST ARMED FORCES' PROGRAM, AND TO ENSURE RESPONSIBLE,
OBJECTIVE AND TRUTHFUL PRESS.

2. LAW BEGINS WITH STATEMENT THAT DISCUSSION AND
CRITICISM OF POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS DOCTRINES, LAWS AND
ACTS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, AND OF WAY SUCH LAWS ARE
CARRIED OUT IN PRACTICE ARE PERMITTED. ONLY STIPULATION
IS THAT RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF CITIZENS BE RESPECTED
IN THE PROCESS.

3. LAW THEN GOES ON TO PROVIDE PENALTIES OF UP TO
\$US 20,000 AND 60 DAYS SUSPENSION FOR INFRACTIONS OF
PRINCIPLES OF ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT(MFA). SPECIFIC
INFRACTIONS LISTED ARE: A) INCITING OR PROVOKING,
EVEN INDIRECTLY, MILITARY DISOBEDIENCE INCLUDING
DISRESPECT FOR MILITARY LAWS AND REGULATIONS; B)
OFFENSES TO PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL OF STATE
AND GOVERNMENT; C) OFFENSES TO CHIEFS OF FOREIGN
STATES AND TO ACCREDITED DIPLOMATS IN PORTUGAL; D)
REFERENCES TO MILITARY OPERATIONS WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION
OF ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF; E) INCITEMENT OF STRIKES,
WORK STOPPAGES OR ILLEGAL DEMONSTRATIONS; F) "IDEOLOGICAL
AGGRESSIONS" CONTRARY TO CARRYING OUT OF PROGRAM OF
MFA; G) INCITEMENT TO COMMIT COMMON CRIMES;
H) PUBLICATION OR SPREADING OF MISINFORMATION IN ORDER
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TO ACHIEVE RESULTS OUTLINED ABOVE.

4. LAW STATES THAT SPEECHES OF PRESIDENT MUST BE BASED ON
TEXT FURNISHED BY OFFICIAL SOURCES, AND NO ALTERATION
OF SENSE BY DELETIONS OR ADDITIONS OF MISLEADING
HEADLINES ALLOWED.

5. APPEAL PROCEDURES PROVIDED FOR IN LAW, AND

RESPONSIBILITY OF SUSPENDED FIRMS TO PAY THEIR EMPLOYEES
ESTABLISHED.

6. WE UNDERSTAND AS HOC COMMITTEE, NAMES OF
WHOSE MEMBERS NOT YET ANNOUNCED, WILL BE COMPOSED ENTIRELY
OF MILITARY OFFICERS, INCLUDING MAJOR VITOR ALVES OF ARMED
FORCES MOVEMENT AND COUNCIL OF STATE. PROBABLE WAY IN WHICH
NEW MEDIA GUIDELINES WILL BE APPLIED IN PRACTICE NOT
YET CLEAR, BUT MAJOR ALVES HAS TOLD GROUP JOURNALISTS
THAT INTENT OF RULES IS NOT TO CENSOR MEDIA, BUT TO
GUARANTEE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND THOUGHT. PRIMARY
INTEREST OF GOVERNMENT IN OUR VIEW IS TO ASSURE
GREATER MEASURE OF RESPONSIBILITY FROM RADION AND TV,
ESPECIALLY FROM FAR LEFT NEWSPAPERS, SUCH AS MRPP'S
LUTA POPULAR, WHO HAVE IN PAST CALLED FOR MILITARY TO
LAY DOWN ARMS, ETC. (AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED GOP
HAS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED MEASURES TO BRING ABOUT MORE
BALANCED AND RESPONSIBLE TV AND RADIO PROGRAMMING).

7. JOURNALIST AND MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES, AND SOCIALIST
PARTY HAVE STRONGLY CRITICIZED DECREE LAW FOR FOLLOWING
REASONS: 1) VAGUENESS OF SPECIFIC PROVISIONS AS TO WHAT
CONSTITUTES AN OFFENSE; 2) HEAVY PENALTIES INCLUDING
EXCESSIVE FINES AND IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION FOR VIOLATIONS;
AND 3) SUSPENSIONS TAKE EFFECT IMMEDIATELY WHILE APPEAL
PROCEDURE UNDERWAY. THIS CONSTITUTES IN THEIR OPINION
AFFRONT TO DUE PROCESS OF LAW AND COULD FINALLY
RUIN AN ORGANIZATION. SOCIALIST PARTY CLAIMED THAT
ONLY ITS SENSE OF PATRIOTIC RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP
ACCOMPLISH MFA AIMS PREVENTED IT FROM CALLING ON
SOCIALIST MINISTERS IN PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT TO
RESIGN. MAJOR ALVES' REPLY IS THAT TRUE DEMOCRATS
NEED NOT WORRY, INASMUCH AS FACT THAT CONTROL COMMITTEE
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COMPOSED OF MILITARY OFFICERS "PROFOUNDLY IMBUE WITH
SPIRIT OF ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT" IS ANOTHER GUARANTEE
THAT CENSORSHIP WILL NOT BE CARRIED OUT IN PRACTICE.

8. COMMENT: IF NARROWLY INTERPRETED AND STRICTLY
ADMINISTERED, LAW HAS POTENTIAL FOR INDUCING SUCH
CAUTION IN MEDIA AS TO BE VIRTUALLY AS RESTRICTIVE
AS PRE-PUBLICATION CENSORSHIP OF THE PAST. UNDER
LATTER SYSTEM, JOURNALISTS COULD WRITE ANYTHING THEY
WANTED TO (AND THEREBY GET IT OFF THEIR CHESTS), BUT
FACED NO SPECIFIC SANCTIONS BEYOND NOT SEEING THEIR
MATERIAL IN PRINT. NOW THEY FACE FAIRLY TOUGH SANCTIONS
IF THEY GUESS WRONG CONCERNING WHAT IS AND WHAT IS NOT
WITHIN THE GUIDELINES, WHICH ARE IN CERTAIN RESPECTS
SUSCEPTIBLE OF WIDELY-VARYING INTERPRETATIONS.

HOWEVER, WE FEEL THAT REGIME WILL APPLY LAW AS GENTLY
AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER NOT DAMAGE THE CREDIBILITY OF
THEIR AVOWED DEDICATION TO DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES.
WE SEE MEASURE AS ONE OF RECENT SERIES OF STEPS
DESIGNED TO ENFORCE ORDER ON THE COUNTRY AFTER
EXHORTATION WAS SHOWN TO BE INSUFFICIENT. LAW IS
CLEARLY DIRECTED AGAINST THE LEFT, WHICH HAS
DOMINATED MEDIA SINCE APRIL 25, AND AS SUCH REPRESENTS
ADDED EVIDENCE THAT JUNTA AND MFA ARE ON SAME CENTRIST
WAVELENGTH. WE FIND IT IRONIC THAT MILITARY
SPOKESMAN WHO DEFENDED MEASURE WAS MAJOR ALVES, WHO
HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS A LEFTIST, AND SEE THIS AS
INDICATION THAT TERM "LEFTIST" AS APPLIED TO
PORTUGUESE CAREER MILITARY OFFICERS IS A HIGHLY
RELATIVE TERM.
SCOTT

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